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CHERRIES ARE RIPE
By A. E. Albright

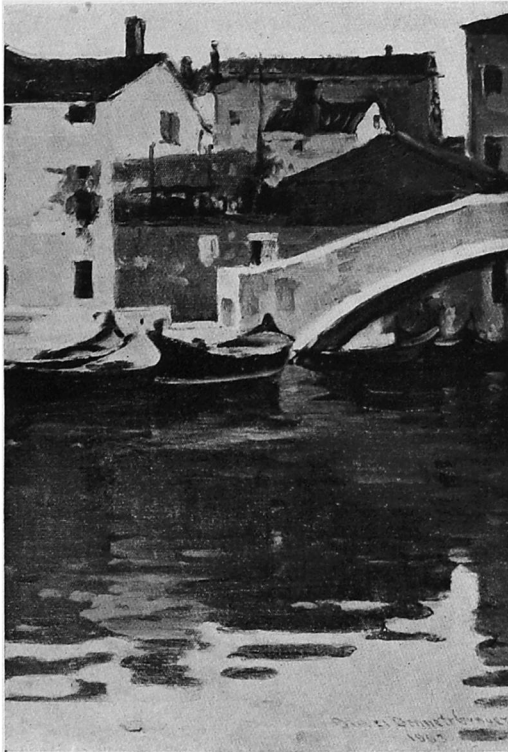
WORK OF WESTERN ARTISTS

I do not find anything about the eighth annual exhibition of the Society of Western Artists that is peculiarly "Western," unless it be a certain vigorous freshness of initiative and procedure that is not a leading characteristic of Eastern exhibits. I do not mean by this that the works shown speak any other than the universal language that is art's, or that they are the least "provincial" in the sense implied by some Eastern editors when they use the word to qualify or excuse Western things. I mean only that they show something of the same disregard of fashions in painting that those who are doing real things of any kind in a real way have for the fashion of the clothes in which they are doing them.

In a word, the pictures borrow no more from locality than art should borrow from the subject matter it aims to interpret. So we may at once eliminate the word "Western" from the discussion, and consider the works reviewed just as art pure and simple. This may the more fitly be done for the reason that the pictures, while painted by Western artists, are as wide in their range of subjects as art itself, and quite as free from the limitations of geographical lines.

There are some pictures here so good, so full of the qualities that make pictures survive, that they might singly be made texts for an article. Such are "Our Village," by J. Ottis Adams; "Feeding the Cattle," by Eugenie Fish Glaman; "A Summer Evening Moonlight," by Walter Christ; "The Rivals," by Karl A. Buehr; and some others. I shall, however, with the space at my command, be able to speak only briefly of these, and of those others that most impressed me when before them, and that now that I am away from them, stand out most clearly from the background of the general impression.

As in all exhibitions of current art, we find here some things that clearly suggest that the one who did them might more profitably be doing something else. What distinguishes this exhibit is that the average of these economically bad adventures is uncommonly small. It is pleasant, also, to note that the person responsible is usually



A RAINY DAY
By Oliver Dennett Grover

young, and not committed to misdirection by a long habit of it. Having in mind how often already the years have convicted me of mistaking mere immaturity for organic hopeless badness, I shall say nothing of these things, but call attention only to the works that we need, lest we forget that "life is not bread alone," but also, and more, those aptitudes and appreciations that by the providence of art's ministry yet survive in us, and enable us still to take pleasure in beautiful things.

And these things—skies, summer, mystery of moonlight, red-gold of October, lipping of bright water on gray shore—all that

the landscape-painter shows here, or frankly tries to, are immemorial. Nor can any pull and grind of "things as they are" quite destroy our capacity for joy in them. But alas! we are in a great hurry; and alas again! we are too distrustful of ourselves, and not distrustful enough of the opinion that is based upon the narrow conception of art for its own sake rather than ours. If taking our time we will view these things from the standpoint of natural human sensibilities and

experience, as well as from that of their craft, we shall understand them, and the good things they are saying, and will ever seek to say.

In view of what is now procurable for a trifling money consideration, it would seem that a canvas picture must, when it takes life for its subject, be much more significant just as painting—and as distinct from its design of line and of light and shade—than it need to have been, say twenty years ago. Life is nowadays so well pictured for us on the printed page that the painted story must add to some graphic excellence, some dignity or impressiveness or charm that is only within the reach of its own medium to give. It has thus come to pass that the painter is more and more seeking his subject in the landscape field, for only his own art of color can renew within us, in any full measure, the delight we feel in skies and in what they cover.

And now, asking the reader to bear in mind these general considerations, for I believe them to bear closely upon the subject, I will call attention to some of the works that in the sum of their qualities seem to me the best among the one hundred and seventy-eight shown. I should say that there is no picture here that interprets its own subject-matter into more fit terms of art than "Feeding the Cattle," by Eugenie Fish Glaman. It shows not only an exceptionally close observation of the forms, surfaces, and nature of what enters into its pictorial purpose, but it has also the quality which makes a picture charming. Everything under this luminous



THE OLD GOWN
By Frederick W. Freer

gray sky—cattle, earth, trees, barn, and man—are so well in key with its own pitch of color and of light that the picture affects me like music, and not only by virtue of this tonal harmony, but also by the whole pictorial disposition of its color and of its line. I mean this for very high praise.

Above this picture is one by Frederick C. Sylvester, "Rest," that impressed me with some specially poetic insight as well as painter's skill in the interpretation of its phase. The quiet water of a bay or lake is lapping a shore that the sun has left, and that stretches in dark yet luminous perspective to a building where the sunlight yet lingers, its glory still mirrored in the broad water. This glory—and our realization of it is distinctly the purpose and achievement of the picture—is brought well home to us by the way in which the bright water is accented by the dark shore, and the dark reflection of the houseboat in the lower right corner, around which the ripples swirl, and into which the brightness breaks.

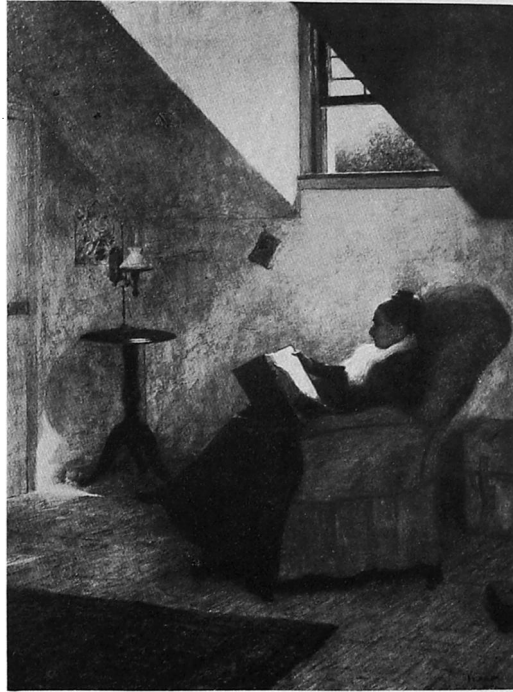
Karl A. Buehr's "The Rivals" seems well conceived pictorially, but is even more to be remarked for the way in which it connects its incident with what happens, has happened, and will happen everywhere. The two Dutch youths who seek to engage the interest of the Dutch maiden at the spinning-wheel are telling a larger story than their own, and on the whole, telling it well. Of the three figures, the one on the right is most convincing. His neighbor, too, though objectively less in evidence, is sympathetically conceived, and his general look is such as lets us pretty well into his state of mind. There seems to be, strictly considered, some failure on the girl's head, though the pose and general expression of the whole figure suggests an intimate understanding of her relation to the imagined situation; such understanding as will at once suggest experience, though not necessarily implying it, for an artist may present a situation convincingly without ever having "been there."

Louis Berriker, in his two pictures "Sunlight and Shadow" and "When the Sun is Low," has made good connection between his own personal sentiment of the phases he treats and ours. I like the former the better; a certain bunchiness of mass, and a too arbitrary departure from natural forms in the outlines of his trees, interfere a little with my enjoyment of the other. In "Sunlight and Shadow," though I feel some slight tendency to ignore or slur certain things in the phrasing that are an essential part of those elements from which our common appreciation of it is derived, the observation and also the qualities of painting are notable. Such a foreground, such crisp contrast and relation of the nature forms that late sunlight falls upon, are not achieved by any tyro of the brush. So, while I find something wanting in the tonal unity that results from a just appreciation of what sunlight shadows gather from the positive of such a phase, I would place this work among the especially notable ones of the exhibit.

If greatly prepossessed against laboriousness in painting, we might easily pass "A Summer Evening—Moonlight," by Walter Christ. For myself I found it first and last captivating. To love things is to linger upon them, and a certain minutiae of brushwork are not always to be derided. If they were, where would be Hobbema, Rousseau, and some others? So, while I think it quite possible that the charm of this moonlight phase might be more easily made a part of our prosaic daylight consciousness, I do not lay it against the artist that he has interpreted his theme in this patient, loving way. Here, no doubt, is moonlight, its charm and mystery of indeterminate spaces and color, and what more do we want?

It requires a certain sensibility to the niceties of painting as a fine art to see how good in its own way is Walter Marshall Clute's unpretentious canvas, "Saugatuck Sand Dunes." The habit

of mind, encouraged by such works as, say, Mr. Johansen's "October Afternoon," is not at all the proper one when looking at this excellent picture. We need here to be a little analytical. The claims of that in painting which well distinguishes planes and color values, must be kept in mind. I will confess that, overborne by the greater pictorial impressiveness of some more assertive canvases, I passed this picture by in my first view of the collection. My second impression of it—the first is often wide open to the correction of after judgment—placed it among the works that the most cursory review of the exhibit should



SUNDAY MORNING
By J. W. Millett



ALONG LONG ISLAND SOUND

By John F. Stacey

not ignore. While its subject matter is not pictorially impressive, the way in which the artist has interpreted foreground of scrub-fringed sand and flat perspectives, is very much the way of art.

Ralph Clarkson's "Study" treats the facts of the case in a way that enables us instantly to realize the point of view that makes the art equation. It is impossible to mistake his purpose for one that aims first to make clear the substance and texture of things. This head that merges as naturally into gray shadow as day into evening, this luminous gray shoulder, these draperies, are clearly not meant to convince us of themselves, but to engage our interest rather in some abstraction of beauty—say, some low-pitched harmony of lights and shadows, and in a minor rather than a major key.

There can be no doubt that John F. Stacey has viewed the panoramic expanse of sky, sea, and country that opens out "Along Long Island Sound" with a keen appreciation of all that would most impress us if we had been by his side. As a boy I have looked abroad from such large standpoints, and such is the art of this picture that looking at it, I find myself a boy again.

"Nursery Rhymes," by Frederick W. Freer, is exquisite in its appreciation of the mother's relation to her child in such a moment



OLIVE TREES

By L. H. Meakin

as he pictures. The child is also most childlike in its look, half-wondering and wholly credulous. There is close observation and a very knowing art of painting in the whole contrivance and brushwork of the picture. I think that L. H. Meakins's "Olive Trees" is the best of this well-known artist's contribution to this exhibit. There is that in the picture that, though I knew nothing before of its subject matter, makes me feel that I now know it very well. "A Rainy Day, Venice," by Oliver Dennett Grover; "Lending a Hand," by Karl A. Buehr; "Husking Corn," by Mathias Alten; "A Morning Sea," by I. C. Steele; "The Valley" and "Aspens," by Adolph R. Shulz; "Summer Morning," by Lucy Hartroth; "The Time of the Red Bud" and "Thinning Leaves," by W. Forsyth; "Autumn on Shinnecock Hill," by Frank R. Wadsworth; "Moonlight, Daubigny's Home," by Alexis Joseph Fournier; "Old Mills of Brookville," by J. Ottis Adams—notably the last three—and "October Afternoon," by J. C. Johansen; are among the works that I would like to dwell upon if space permitted.*

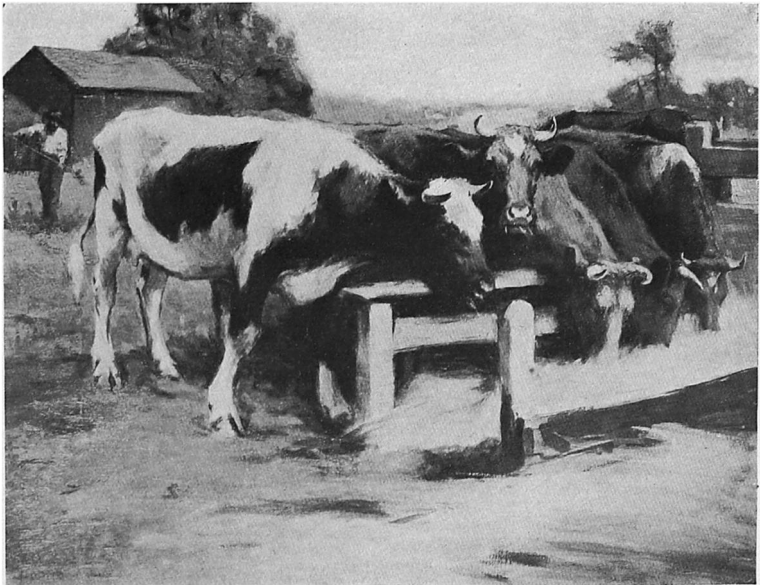
HENRY CHARLES PAYNE.

* Four cuts following also from Society of Western Artists' Exhibition.

IMPERIAL ARBITERS OF ART

Much has been said, in praise or condemnation, of imperial arbiters in matters of art, and the German kaiser, on account of his decisive measures, has been made the text of a good many philippics, and not a few enthusiastic indorsements. The quota of the former, however, far exceeds that of the latter. The artists naturally resent dictatorship, and relegate to themselves the right to decide what is and what is not art, what is and what is not worthy of public approval and support. On the other hand, many competent judges feel the need of a controlling hand to eliminate fads, vagaries, and license in art, and are prone to laud the dictator, provided, of course, that his actions are characterized by sobriety and good judgment. One such advocate of imperial decree, whose words I am permitted to send to the readers of *BRUSH AND PENCIL*, waxes humorously in defense of a guiding, even of a restricting, hand—a power, so to speak, behind the throne.

According to the dictum of the critic referred to, the rich Romans



FEEDING CATTLE
By Eugenie Fish Glaman

had private galleries of paintings and sculpture, like the cultivated and wealthy Greeks whom they copied in letters and the arts—but they had no public picture shows. A thousand artists did not besiege a building called an art academy, while a delegation of their more astute or lucky fellows, calling themselves Academicians, decided which ones among the pictures submitted should be hung—and then hanged—by the critics, and which should be cast forth to the profane and vulgar crowd outside. Had such an institution as an academy show with its jury of painters existed in Rome, the Latin dictionary would be far richer in curse words than it is. For the imagination which prompts the youth of France, Germany, and America to devise travesties of fact and fancy on canvas also helps them in the task of adding to the number of drastic words, sharp and explosive hints of a quick dispatch to places far remote—and objectionable when found—veiled allusions to former or future states of existence, obloquies neatly packed in some brief word. These are some of the lines on which we excel the ancients.

Take a Roman emperor, for example; what a field he missed in the lack of an official art academy! Poor thing—the reader will



AUTUMN
By J. C. Johansen

remember that these are not the words of the undersigned—he had only music and letters in which to reward with the gold of plundered provinces the professors who took care not to know more than he, when he was around, and commit to prison or send into exile those incautious enough to write better verse or perform better on the lyre. The modern Cæsar has a host of architects, sculptors, and painters

whom he can lecture and encourage if they only will not attempt to do anything beyond the forms prescribed by imperial and royal authority.

The vast field of Philistine art lies before him, and the art lord can cease a moment being war lord to appoint his Captains of ten and Colonels of a hundred, his Generals and his Field Marshals of art. He can, by his profound strategy, frustrate the plans of servile revolutionists, who without asking permission, have gathered together to poison the minds of the people with impressionist paintings and sculptures ribald and Rodinesque. He watches over the morals of his subject artists with a fatherliness beautiful in its paternalism, and fixes with a scathing stare the curator of a public museum who sneaks a "vibratory" land-



FEATHERING THE NEST
By Karl A. Buehr

scape into the imperial collections. No more favors for him! Writhing under the secret sting of his own wickedness, the unpatriotic wretch tries to drown his bad conscience in good beer, and soon his occupation's gone.

Even an emperor, however, cannot escape the hidden sneer, nor protect himself from absurd reports which are started by artists furious because their work does not hit the proper level of sane and patriotic art. For example, the German emperor is just now the victim of a silly story, that next year he will be one of the jury to sit in judgment on the art works for the exhibition at Berlin.

There is nothing in it. The German emperor always is the jury without forming part of it; for the jury knows the imperial taste. Such objects as may pass the guard while still unacceptable to the imperial arbiter only serve to cast in relief the works which receive medals and honorable mentions. They serve the purpose of the drunken helots in Lacedemon, they are warnings to good German art boys. The invention is jejune.

It shows the degradation to which the minds of the secession artists of the Fatherland have come when they fabricate such nonsense about their wise and stern, yet truly kind, patron. They should not say such a thing, for it belittles the kaiser. If they cannot be patriots and paint and sculpt on the official lines, they might at least have the heart to recognize that a ruler who works so hard for their betterment should not be made the target for stories which, to a person in his exalted rank, come perilously near insult to majesty. Let them thank God they have a kaiser who day and night protects them from the corrosive influence of modern French art.

These words may not accord with the views of the rank and file of the apostles of liberty, but after all they are worth reading—it being premised that they are offered here only as the presentation of one side of a big disputed question. This much at least may be said: if in our municipal art we feel the need of a censor to banish disfigurements, eliminate flagrant breaches of taste, and provide for sane, wholesome, worthy art, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a similar official might be of service on similar lines in public galleries and current exhibitions.



THE SOFIE
By Anna L. Stacey

A READER.